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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

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TAGS: PGOV PREL KPKO PHUM AU UNSC SU
SUBJECT: HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS MINISTER REQUESTS TRANSITION FROM
EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOPMENT AID

¶1. (SBU) CDA Fernandez paid a courtesy call January 21 on the newly-appointed Minister of Humanitarian Affairs Haroun Ron. Minister Ron is a respected and loyal member of the SPLM who assumed this post when the SPLM allowed its ministers back into the government earlier this month.

¶2. (SBU) With hardline NCP-member and Commissioner General for Humanitarian Aid Hassabo Abdel Rahman in attendance as a regime minder, Minister Ron made a special point of thanking CDA Fernandez for U.S. treatment of Sudan over the years, highlighting in particular the "decades of support from USAID." In reference to the CPA, Minister Ron commented that "the key is to make sure these guys (the NCP) not only sign the paper but also ensure that the agreement works." The Minister pointed out that the regime's job now is to make unity attractive.

¶3. (SBU) The Minister and Hassabo both requested that more USAID funding go toward development activities. Hassabo said that what Sudan needs now is "early recovery" and "recovery" activities. He noted that currently only 30 percent of donor money goes toward early recovery and 19 percent goes toward recovery, while 51 percent goes toward humanitarian assistance. CDA replied that over a million people are now dependent on food aid, so we cannot abandon them. However, he noted that USAID is now evaluating all of its programs and reported that there is a growing emphasis on the transition from humanitarian assistance to development. This is something the Ministry should further discuss with USAID.

¶4. (SBU) CDA highlighted the recent Development Alternatives, Incorporated (DAI) incident in El Fasher and said that our people had felt threatened and mistreated by GOS officials and that should not be the case, even if the law currently allows for equipment to be taken by the government when a project ends. Without making any apology, Hassabo noted that "often there are suspicions in war areas." He said this incident underlines the need to establish technical agreements before initiating programs to define clearly at the outset what will happen to equipment at the end of a project.

¶5. (SBU) CDA noted that the GOS often does the right thing eventually, but does not get credit for it because of the way it does it - giving the impression that it is being forced to do it - and doesn't like it. "You are misers in your cooperation," he noted "and nobody likes that." In this regard, CDA urged that the moratorium on restrictions for humanitarian access be extended immediately and not at the eleventh hour on January 31, which would make it appear once again as if the GOS is not cooperative. Minister Ron promised that a memo will be provided to President Al-Bashir this week seeking approval for the extension. Hassabo

also promised that the moratorium will be extended. CDA again urged that this not happen at midnight on January 31.

¶6. (SBU) Comment: Minister Ron, like his SPLM colleagues in other ministries, finds himself in an incredibly difficult position - attempting to exert control over regime hardliners like Hassabo and State Minister of Humanitarian Affairs (and indicted ICC war criminal) Ahmed Haroun. Although he will not be able to control them, his presence should provide some small openings to advance our aims with the GOS in regard to humanitarian assistance. We expect that President Al-Bashir will extend the moratorium on restrictions to humanitarian access, but only at the last minute or possibly after the deadline has passed, with the ill grace so typical of the Khartoum regime.

FERNANDEZ